

DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

March 10, 1959

Dear John:

In accordance with your request of February 26, 1959, I have reviewed the enclosed letter from Mrs. Mildred L. Hatton of the Providence District Nursing Association to you, in which Mrs. Hatton asks whether the "Meals on Wheels" program would qualify for assistance under H. R. 1119, entitled "The Rehabilitation Act of 1959".

The "Meals on Wheels" program is one which provides, at a nominal cost, a certain number of hot meals in the home to individuals over 45 years of age, who are unable to cook their own meals. Through this program a disabled individual, who could not prepare his own meals, could remain in his own home rather than enter an institution and thereby live more independently. In this respect, Mrs. Hatton points out, the "Meals on Wheels" program would contribute to independent living.

While this is true, it would be our opinion that this service, as a program, could not qualify for assistance under H. R. 1119, as introduced by you on January 7, 1959. The programs that would qualify for support as programs under H. R. 1119, would, it seems to us, be only those that would enable individuals to achieve independence in living by meeting their everyday living needs through their own efforts and activities -- preparing their own meals, traveling alone, etc. The "Meals on Wheels" program meets a most necessary subsistence need, but does not supply the restorative services that would enable an individual to achieve the independence in living contemplated by H. R. 1119.

Even though the "Meals on Wheels" program would not seem to qualify for support as a program under H. R. 1119, it would seem to us that meals on an individual basis might be purchased for a client undergoing rehabilitation services for independent living, during the period in which that individual was unable to prepare his own meals. As you know, "maintenance", when provided in conjunction with other services, is defined in H. R. 1119 as a service that can be paid for under the proposal. Therefore, if a State rehabilitation agency found that the "Meals on Wheels" service for one of its clients, who was in economic need, provided the most desirable means of meeting his maintenance needs during the period of rehabilitation, it could pay "Meals on Wheels" for this service. It could not, however, pay for this service as a maintenance item for an indefinite period, or for people who had no prospects of achieving independence in living, or if provided independently of any other service in the rehabilitation process.

*John*

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It would seem to me that the operation of such a program in any community where it is warranted would be a valuable addition to the total community services.

Sincerely yours,

  
Director

Attachment

Hon. John E. Fogarty  
Member of Congress  
House of Representatives  
Washington 25, D.C.